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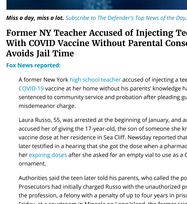
Former NY Teacher Accused of Injecting Teen With COVID Vaccine Without Parental Consent Avoids Jail Time + More

The Defender's COVID NewsWatch provides a roundup of the latest headlines related to the SARS CoV-2 virus, including its origins and COVID vaccines. The views expressed in the excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender.

By The Defender Staff



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Former NY Teacher Accused of Injecting Teen With COVID Vaccine Without Parental Consent Avoids Jail Time

Fox News reported:

A former New York high school teacher accused of injecting a teen with a COVID-19 vaccine at her home without his parents' knowledge has been sentenced to community service and probation after pleading guilty to a misdemeanor charge.

Laura Russo, 55, was arrested at the beginning of January, and authorities accused her of giving the 17-year-old, the son of someone she knew, a vaccine dose at her residence in Sea Cliff. Newsday reported that Russo later testified in a hearing that she got the dose when a pharmacist gave her expiring doses after she asked for an empty vial to use as a Christmas ornament.

Authorities said the teen later told his parents, who called the police. Prosecutors had initially charged Russo with the unauthorized practice of the profession, a felony with a penalty of up to four years in prison. But on Friday, at a courtroom in Mineola on Long Island, the former science teacher at Herricks High School pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor count of attempting the unauthorized practice of medicine and a count of disorderly conduct.

On Friday, Judge Howard Sturim ordered her to fulfill 100 hours of community service over a year, while under interim probation. He was also ordered to go to therapy twice a week and to stay away from the teen. If Russo meets the community service requirement, prosecutors will vacate the misdemeanor charge.

U.S. State Dept Says Toll of COVID in China a Concern for the World

Reuters reported:

The United States hopes that China can address the current COVID-19 outbreak as the toll of the virus is a global concern due to the size of the Chinese economy, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said on Monday.

He added that anytime the virus is spreading it has the potential to mutate and pose a threat everywhere. "We've seen that over the course of many different permutations of this virus and certainly another reason why we are so focused on helping countries around the world address COVID," he said.

FDA Expert Panel to Discuss the Future of COVID Vaccines

Axios reported:

Food and Drug Administration advisers will hold a key meeting next month to discuss the state of the pandemic and whether COVID vaccines need to be modified again to better limit the fast-changing virus.

The big picture: Health experts say the Jan. 26 meeting, announced on Friday, will sketch out a long-term strategy that responds to new strains and shifting threats.

Details: The expert panel will evaluate the evolution of variants and the efficacy of current monovalent and bivalent vaccines to examine what the best course of action is for vaccinations moving forward.

What's next: Following the advisers' meeting, the FDA itself will then consider whether it'll recommend adjusting current vaccine authorizations, and also consider what is the most efficient process to select strains to include in primary and booster shots. Don't forget: Health officials have said they believe that COVID shots could potentially start following an annual schedule, similar to the flu.

25 Governors Urge Biden to End COVID Public Health Emergency

The Epoch Times reported:

Twenty-five governors are urging President Joe Biden to end the COVID-19 public health emergency, which has remained in place despite a drop in COVID-19 metrics and the emergence of less virulent variants.

The governors say the emergency phase of the COVID-19 pandemic is and has been over for some time, noting that Biden himself said in September that "the pandemic is over."

The public health emergency is harming states by enabling bloated Medicaid rolls, costing hundreds of millions of dollars, the governors said. Since the beginning of the pandemic, states have added 20 million people to the rolls — an increase of 30%. Until the emergency ends, the population covered by Medicaid will continue to grow, regardless of whether people are still eligible, the governors warned.

In Face of Tripledemic, CVS and Walgreens Limit Purchases of Kids' Pain Meds

U.S. News & World Report reported:

As a tripledemic of the flu, COVID and RSV continues to spread across the United States, customers at two major pharmacy chains will now be limited as to how much children's pain relievers and fever-reducing medications they can buy for their sick child.

Both CVS and Walgreens confirmed the limits Monday, CNN reported, though they've approached it in different ways.

Walgreens is only limiting children's pain medications purchased online. The limit is six per transaction. Meanwhile, CVS is limiting both in-store and online purchases to two products per transaction.

Number of Children, Teens Killed Rose Sharply in Pandemic's First Year: Study

The Hill reported:

The number of children and teenagers killed annually rose sharply during 2020, the first full year of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new study.

The study from a group of eight researchers associated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Defense Department and Georgia State University's public health school found that the overall child homicide rate rose from 2.2 per 100,000 children in 2019 to 2.8 per 100,000 in 2020, which is a 27.7% increase.

The increase was most pronounced for boys, for which the rate rose from 2.9 per 100,000 in 2018 to 4.1 in 2020. That's a 16.1% increase.

Children aged 11 to 15 were the age group with the largest increase, with the rate increasing from 1.3 in 2018 to 2.2 in 2020, a 26.9% jump. The rate for 16- and 17-year-olds rose 19%, from 6.6 to 10.0.

Rising Cases of Invasive Strep A in Kids Have Experts Concerned

U.S. News & World Report reported:

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is looking into a possible increase in invasive group A strep bacterial infections among children in the United States. A number of children's hospitals in different parts of the country have reported seeing more dangerous strep A infections in recent weeks, leading federal officials to launch an investigation.

The agency noted the investigation for invasive group A strep on its website and warned that a national shortage of the liquid antibiotic amoxicillin could complicate efforts to treat the infections. However, experts say group A strep responds to many available antibiotics.

The U.S. cases follow a wave of invasive group A strep cases in the United Kingdom that have killed at least 15 children since mid-September, according to the U.K. Health Security Agency.

Children's hospitals in Arizona, Colorado, Texas and Washington have reported higher-than-average numbers of cases this year compared to past years, NBC News reported. But it's not happening in all parts of the United States.

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Christine Vigneri
9 days ago
that teacher deserves a harsher sentence.She injected an experimental drug with no knowledge of its contents or its consequences.And what kind of pharmacist hands over a vial with the drug still in it?If this boy experiences myocarditis or any adverse reaction,it's on them.
11 Reply Share

drw22
9 days ago
Last I heard, there were two people dead from Covid in China's recent wave. I'm sure more pedestrians are killed in a day than that.
1 Reply Share

drw22
9 days ago
I suppose nobody has asked if the kids who end up with a bad case of strep, or die from it, had the Covid shot.
Reply Share

Chase Sheridan
9 days ago
"Russo later testified in a hearing that she got the dose when a pharmacist gave her expiring doses after she asked for an empty vial to use as a Christmas ornament." Ummm....shouldn't the pharmacist be facing some serious charges?? EXPIRING doses?? Just hand it over to some customer?? WTH?!?!
Reply Share

Peggy Nieto → Chase Sheridan
9 days ago
Her story doesn't make sense and should have been investigated further.
1 Reply Share

Tom Petrie
9 days ago
"The increase was most pronounced for boys, for which the rate rose from 2.9 per 100,000 in 2018 to 4.1 in 2020. That's a 16.1% increase." Sorry, that's a 41.4 percent increase, NOT 16.1 percent.
Reply Share

Peggy Nieto
9 days ago
The teacher should be in jail. Period. What a joke the justice system is in NY.
Reply Share

joreenna
9 days ago
That Teacher deserves to be injected forcibly with the real Covid shots. If that teen dies it's murder for her!
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Marlene GB
9 days ago
Where did the supposed "teacher" get her hands on the poison jab?
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Steve → Marlene GB
8 days ago
Read the article! (Or, the comments.)
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Suckitbiggharma
9 days ago
I would have been on the 5:00 news SMILING if she did this to my child.
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